



Community Cafés:

Changing the Lives of Children through Conversations that Matter

Our Beliefs

Social change is possible one conversation at a time

All children, therefore their families, have an inalienable right to the five protective factors

Our Values

Courage, Community, Health, Freedom, Compassion

Our Knowledge Base

Cafes are a series of guided conversations that provide the stepping stool we utilize to reach for higher heights. This stool has three legs of support:

1. The Five Protective Factors Essential for Children to Thrive

2. Leadership that Begins with Self and Transforms Communities

3. Parent Partnership that Impacts Practice, Programs and Policy



Our Action

The World Café technique harvests collective knowledge and transforms it into action. (Juanita Brown, *The World Café*, Berret-Koehler, 2005.) Community Cafés are planned, led and monitored by trained parents who learn the World Café process, can relate to the participants and build on the assets of their neighborhood. Parents host cafés with the intent of mentoring other parents who become hosts themselves to form more café groups. Group-building traditions, customs, visuals, foods, music and problem solving techniques from the cultures represented in each café, help to ensure cultural relevance. Meaningful

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relationships develop as parents and community partners participate as equals in a café series that sustains a value of reciprocity. Funding provides support for mileage, childcare, meals and a stipend for the training, planning and hosting time. This support ensures all participants can attend without concern that their participation is taking away precious resources from their family.

A Typical Process

Our team supports state and local systems to begin a conversation with their collaborative partners and community leaders to implement the Community Café approach throughout the ecological model. Our technical assistance offers a full day of training along with support before and after this event. To start this process you would:

1. Contact the Alliance for details and ideas on how to access technical assistance resources
2. Set up a leadership team with at least one other person
3. Begin thinking about the goal you have for implementing the CC approach and the outcomes you would like to see achieved

Community Cafe Approach

Our leadership team will provide an orientation process that ensures a meaningful training, as well as ongoing support to maintain the integrity of the Community Café approach. This approach:

- Ⓢ Involves the implementation of the World Café and other hosting techniques
- Ⓢ Allows possibilities to emerge from a living system of a new group of people gathering for an agreed upon purpose of strengthening families and communities
- Ⓢ Reframes what we usually think of as leadership and leaders
- Ⓢ Develops intentional partnerships to promote the five essential protective factors for children to thrive and in order to strengthen families and prevent child maltreatment

What Hosts Can Expect

Community Cafés gatherings are designed to fit the people attending, the hosts' intentions and the resources of the community. Cafes typically:

- Ⓢ Are hosted by parent leaders
- Ⓢ Have at least five cafes in a series

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- Ⓢ Meet for about two hours
- Ⓢ Serve a meal
- Ⓢ Provide child care, preferably within the Kid Café guidelines

Outcomes

Hosting cafés in techniques grounded in respect, reciprocity, equality and inclusion produce outcomes that include:

- Ⓢ Increased parent partnerships within communities and at the state systems level
- Ⓢ Increased leadership behavior and knowledge
- Ⓢ Increased knowledge and intentionality in building the five protective factors families need to thrive

Partnerships

In order to ensure positive outcomes partnerships are essential. Examples of common parent partnerships are:

- Ⓢ Children's Trust Funds
- Ⓢ Child Care Resource and Referral Networks to include family, friend and neighbor care
- Ⓢ Early Learning sites and systems
- Ⓢ Non-profit organizations or agencies that serve families/children
- Ⓢ Community based collaboratives or boards
- Ⓢ Schools
- Ⓢ State Strengthening Families through Early Care and Education leadership teams

Frequently Asked Questions:

How do I get parents to come or get them more involved?

Relying on natural community leaders from each site helps to ensure that all cafes are hosted with sensitivity to local culture, norms, needs and the best time to host a gathering. They typically have a network of local contacts and are frequently asked to help begin this process because they possess the local knowledge needed to help create a compelling invitation that will appeal to the constituency in the area.

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Is this right for me?

The Community Café practice is a helpful approach for anyone who wants an effective and efficient tool to disseminate knowledge that leads to action. They are willing to try something different that includes a desire to learn from diverse audiences and impact behavior, program practice and policy throughout the ecological model. Participants are willing to participate in a process rather than an end product to better to learn how to harness collective wisdom and intentional partnerships as a means to impacting social norms. They are also willing to host a series of meaningful conversations and create or strengthen intentional relationships in order to strengthen families.

Who are typical organizational partners?

Organizational partners who have helped the Community Cafes to thrive include Children's Trust and Prevention Funds, community boards, Child Care Resource and Referral programs, United Way, youth prevention projects, primary, secondary and post educational systems and family support centers. Your national partner knowledge base will include the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds and the Center for the Study of Social Policy.

How much do cafes cost?

Community Cafes vary in their cost and are designed to suit the community they are hosted in. Some cafés occur with no funding and others, in order to better ensure equal access, offer childcare, a meal, mileage, a gas card or a bus pass to all participants. Ideally, funding can also provide for a gratitude stipend for volunteers to attend training, planning and hosting time. This support ensures all participants can attend without concern that their participation is taking away precious resources from their family. It can also provide for mileage for parent leaders to attend state partner meetings.

How do people fund this?

Community Cafés in some states are funded by the state Children's Trust or Prevention Fund. Other funding for café's ranges from writing grants to having silent auctions and bake sales, dependent on the needs and resources of the community. The technical assistance involved includes coaching to convene and sustain a Community Café leadership team of parent hosts as they develop the networks and skills needed to achieve their community goals.

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Is this right for my organization?

Contact the National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds to speak directly with a consultant who can help you decide if your organization is ready for this approach. (info@ctfalliance.org)

Has this been tried in diverse communities?

Community Café's are as diverse as the communities they are hosted in. Hosts are coached to integrate culturally relevant music, art, poetry to ensure cultural relevancy and sensitivity. Moreover, cafés use powerful questions that focus on co-creating new culture together as a group and honoring and making more distinctive our own family culture. Our training is offered in Spanish and in English, as is our orientation kit.

What are natural parent leaders? How do you find them?

Natural Parent Leaders are the parents who are often recognizable by their level of participation and knowledge of staff and other parents. They show up at activities and are often seen, for instance, talking in the parking lot with others. Teachers and front line staff often have the best idea of who the natural parent leaders at their school or program are, and feel comfortable tapping them on the shoulder for community involvement or volunteer activities.

What are some common results cafes generate?

Parents gain awareness and understanding of Strengthening Families Five Protective Factors, and have increased access to resources that ensure these Five Protective Factors in their communities. Parents become more involved in their communities and feel confident assuming leadership roles. Community members mentor each other to form webs of support for every family. The strengthened community works together for common goals and with heightened sensitivity to each others culture and needs. Organizations that seek ways to partner with communities are able to find venues for communication and to enhance these partnerships as they're forming. Communities become healthier for all members as these partnerships gather strength and ensure that each community member has the option of taking an active role in the systems that affect their lives.

How do you know this works?

Community Cafes have developed an evaluation process that integrates Appreciative Inquiry with a quantitative evaluation that benefits all participants. Past evaluation results

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are available to share. A formal Theory of Change was developed in 2009 and will be available soon for distribution.

Where can the cafes take place?

Café's can take place in Early Learning Centers, Family Resource Centers, Churches, Health Departments, Libraries, Living rooms, book stores, or any other place where a partner can provide space. We have used parks and are experimenting with hiking cafes and other outdoor spaces for meetings.

How do I learn how to do a café? Who typically participates in this?

An Alliance host will convene the necessary pre-training phone conferences, to help you have clarity in your goals for wanting to host cafés or integrate the CC approach into the work that you are doing. We also use these calls to learn the landscape of your community and design a training package that is tailored to your needs. After the training, our team usually continues to provide coaching to individual sites upon request and can also do follow up clinics on café design and evaluation tools. Parents, community members, any interested hosts and systems administrators usually attend the training together.

How do I know I'm ready to implement the Community Café approach into my work or state system?

If you are interested in forming partnerships with parents, have staff and an organization that is willing to support each other and try something new or implement this into what they are already doing, and are willing to participate in a conference call and commit to a full day training, then your team is ready. Other things that will help your community in implementing the CC approach are current work with parent leaders and/or connections with natural community leaders; A current gathering of community members, as café's can easily be integrated into other forms of community gatherings'; a high community interest in strengthening families or preventing child abuse and neglect; strong community collaborations; an appreciation of the changes that take place when, one by one, people learn to trust each other and work together toward a common vision

For more information on Community Cafés, or to schedule a presentation in your area contact www.ctfalliance.org or Robin Higa at robinhiga3017@comcast.net or by telephone at 360.870.7106.